



Profile of a Canadian Offender

QUICK FACTS

During the past decade, the offender population profile at Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) institutions has changed significantly, putting new pressures on CSC and its operations. In recent years, the rate of change in the offender profile has slowed, but CSC still continues to manage a more diverse and challenging offender population than ever before.

Facts regarding the current offender population profile include:

- Extensive histories of involvement with the court system – roughly nine out of 10 men and eight out of 10 women offenders have previous convictions;
- Extensive histories of violence and violent offences, many assessed as violence-prone, hostile, impulsive and aggressive upon admission;
- Eleven per cent of men and six per cent of women offenders are classified as maximum security on admission;
- One in six men and one in seven women offenders have known affiliations with gangs and/or organized crime;
- More than one in four male offenders in-custody is serving a sentence for homicide;
- Some 13 per cent of men and 24 per cent of women offenders in custody are identified with very serious mental health problems;
- A prevalence of learning disabilities, as well as offenders with low functioning capacities;
- An over-representation of Aboriginal offenders – 17.3 per cent of the institutional population is of Aboriginal ancestry, while the general Aboriginal population is 2.7 per cent of the adult Canadian adult population;

- About three out of four offenders arrive at a federal institution with a serious substance abuse problem.
- A high rate of infectious diseases – inmates have a seven to 10 times higher rate of HIV than the general Canadian population, and approximately a 30 times higher rate of Hepatitis C.

LENGTH OF SENTENCES

Currently, more than 50 per cent of new male offender admissions and 64 per cent of new women offender admissions are serving sentences of less than three years. The result of this can be an increasing polarization of the in-custody population, with roughly one in four men and one in six women offenders serving life sentences – adding to inmate management challenges.

MEETING CHALLENGES

CSC has changed how it operates to better respond to the current offender profile by enhancing intelligence and information systems; implementing population management and mental health strategies; and regularly reviewing and modernizing the delivery of penitentiary operations and rehabilitation programs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Additional information about the Correctional Service of Canada is available at www.csc-scc.gc.ca.

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